



Minutes – April 24 2009, 1 – 3:30 PM  
Legislative Office Building Room 206 - Concord, NH

1. Call to Order/Introduction of the Commissioners - **Commissioners called the meeting to order at 1:31. In attendance: Larry Colby, Mike Geanoulis, and Dr. Scott Meyer were in attendance. David Lauren, Joe Mastromarino, and Cam Sinclair were absent. Commissioners noted the lack of communication about who would be or not be attending.** (Chair Joe Mastromarino arrived at 1:50; he was delayed by a flat tire)
2. Adopt Agenda - **Larry distributed the agenda and requested an addition Steps in the Juvenile Court Process and Steps in the Child Welfare System to Item 10. Scott added the White House Council on Women and Girls. Mike added eight things which are listed under item 10, articles c. – k. Commissioner Colby offered a motion to approve the agenda as amended:  
Motion: Mr. Colby; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mr. Geanoulis; Discussion: None further and passed**
3. Secretary's Report/Approval of March Minutes – **Larry distributed draft minutes. Mike asked to make a slight change to the wording in Item 7: add the word, 'again' to the last sentence. Mike offered a motion to approve the March minutes with the change  
Motion: Mr. Geanoulis; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mr. Colby; Discussion: None further and passed.**

**Colby suggested that future agendas and draft minutes will be sent to members early enough for members to make additions/corrections. He requested that all members take this opportunity make additions/corrections.**

4. Treasurer's Report – **There was no report available in Commissioner Lauren's absence. Mike asked again about confirmation of payment to Lee Newman from the NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men) account. Larry volunteered to check with Barry Bodell before the next meeting**
5. Web Site Update – **Mike referenced the new link to [fatherhood.org/father\\_factor](http://fatherhood.org/father_factor) on the Commission webpage under 'FATHERHOOD,' and to change 'FATHERHOOD' to 'The Importance of Fathers.' He offered to check the website for these items before contacting Scott Garman. Scott Meyer made the point that items approved by vote at Commission meetings could be acted upon before approval of the minutes. That is as soon as the change noted above was approved it could have been enacted**

6. **Commission Seat Update – Chairman Mastromarino offered to draft a letter to the Governor’s Office containing three items: Ask how many applications for the empty Commission seat were on file; asking for a timeline to fill the unfilled seat; and offering any help to secure applications. He will get the draft to Commission members and a finalized letter to the Governor before the next meeting (May 29). Mike suggested copying the final letter to the Governor’s Executive Council and members agreed with this idea**
7. **Elaine Holden-Rivier College/Getting Men Involved Testimony – Commissioner Lauren was absent due to illness and could not confirm Ms. Holden’s invitation or appearance**
8. **Public Input I - Commissioner Geanoulis stepped out of his Commission seat to offer testimony on behalf of one Seacoast NH resident who had shared his personal story with Mike of economic hard times: after paying child support each month his remaining weekly income is \$148.22. As much as he is willing to support his child his child’s household this means that he has difficulties maintaining his own – including periods of homelessness. Mike made the point that all parties - men, women and children – suffer economic hardship after divorce**

**Break -10 min**

9. **Letter to the NH Attorney General and Response – Joe shared the response letter from the Attorney General’s Office (attached). Senior Assistant Attorney General Michael Brown acknowledged the Commission’s letter concerning standardized and consistent enforcement of RSA 633:4. Mr. Brown stated in his letter ‘where RSA 633:4 is not being followed or is being misused, this office would be interested to know the specifics of each such case.’ Commissioners basically agreed that this is a positive development for men and women who feel that court orders supporting regular contact with their children are being blocked. Commissioners also recognized that just because men can now approach a named individual in the AG’s office when they are blocked from seeing their children will not bring immediate solace to them or their children. Members also agreed that letters composed by individual members after inspection and approval could be sent on behalf of the NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men). Commissioner Colby brought this point forward after apologizing for sending the original letter to Attorney General Ayotte on a three-three tie on the matter**
10. **Other Agenda Items Brought Forward at Start of Meeting -10 min**
  - a. **Steps in the Juvenile Court Process and Steps in the Child Welfare System – Colby shared two handouts and made the point that these systems are vastly more complicated than most people think (handouts attached). He made the**

**further point that the Commission may wish to focus on areas in these systems and others where it can have a positive outcome for men and boys**

**b. White House Counsel on Women and Girls – Scott said that he had become aware that the Obama administration had initiated this new effort. The mission ‘...is to provide a coordinated federal response to the challenges confronted by women and girls...’ Scott wondered if there is a similar effort being made for boys and men. He volunteered to draft a letter to the white house praising efforts to confront challenges for women and girls and asking if a similar effort was underway or under consideration for males. He will share the draft within the month with Commission members and mail it on behalf of the NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men)**

**c. Children’s Alliance of NH – Mike stated that NHCSM had been removed from this website as a supporter of the Alliance efforts. Larry volunteered to research this within the month**

**d. 2009 NH Child Support Guidelines Review and Recommendations – Mike brought up the recommendations made in the latest report from a UNH committee to NH DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services), Division of Child Support Services. Larry stated that the document can be accessed by searching by title and the recommendation summary can be found on the NH DHHD website. He also noted that at least the summary included the phrase, ‘shared parenting.’ Mike made the point that the 2004 report made 17 recommendations that had never been enacted. Recommendations have been made for at least the last 15 years numerous times and that NH typically does not enact the suggested recommendations**

**e. Annual NH Domestic Violence Conference (DCYF) (Department of Children Youth and Families) – Mike referenced the annual conference**

**f. Fathering Outreach – (This item and those below are tabled and will be items on the May agenda of the Commission)**

**g. Internship**

**h. NH HHS Commissioner Toumpas/’\$1,000,000 Dollar Man’ Response**

**i. Dad Time**

**j. Pro Bono Lawyers**

**11. Announcements**

**12. Public Input II**

**Next Meeting: Friday May 29 2009 1:00 – 3:30 PM  
Legislative Office Building Room 206  
Concord, NH**

**Respectfully submitted,**

Larry Colby, Secretary